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homemakers' chat

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 9, 1943

U. S. DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

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SUBJECT: "THE U. S. CROP CORPS." Information from extension officials of the
U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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One good way to be sure of enough food to go around is to get out and help raise it. For armies on the field of battle, for hungry allies, for workers at home, every bit of food must be harvested and saved this year. No fruit must spoil for lack of pickers, no vegetables rot the ground for lack of harvesters, no dairy or poultry flock lower production for lack of helpers. Americans of every rank, men and women, boys and girls are enrolling in the U. S. Crop Corps, pledged to help grow food for a nation at war.

In each county the agricultural agent is enrolling anyone with time to give to farm work---recording the time each is free to work and the work he can do. Farmers are now reporting to the agent how much help they need and when they need it. He is helping make plans to have the help on hand when the need arises. Where it is more convenient people are signing up with the U. S. Office of Employment Services, or the Office of Civilian Defense, or some other organization which has volunteered to enlist farm helpers for the U. S. Crop Corps. These offices will turn the names over to the county agent.

Thousands of women in every part of the country are pledging any time they have to work on a farm or in a cannery. Some work a little extra after their regular working hours are over. Others pledge their Saturdays and Sundays during emergency harvesting season. Others plan to spend their vacations on a farm. Still others are enrolling for full time work or for a full season's work in the Women's Land Army which is training inexperienced women to be good farm hands.

Women can do many jobs. They need considerable training and experience for some, others they can learn with a little instruction in the field. Many of the emergency harvesting jobs, such as picking apples, strawberries, or string beans, women can easily do with a little practice and help in getting started. Girls have been successfully cutting asparagus and transplanting tomatoes this spring on the East Coast. To harvest its vast fields of vegetables and fruit orchards Oregon is planning to recruit about 25 thousand women for the summer and fall months. California is organizing labor camps for women which send out crews of harvest labor wherever it is most needed. Women enrolling for this work spend an average of 6 weeks each at the labor camps. Across the country on the other coast Connecticut strawberry-pickers are much in demand, for the season June 15 to July 15. In one area they are building a camp to house 140 girls.

These women come from almost every walk of life---office girls on vacation, school teachers with the summer to contribute to winning the war, wives and sisters of soldiers anxious to get into active war work themselves, or homemakers with extra time to help.

A group of office girls in the Rhode Island State House took time after office hours to pick apples from 4:30 to 7 o'clock. In Alabama wives of the men in a local factory sent the children to school, and then climbed into a bus which took them to nearby potato fields where potatoes would have gone to waste without their help. They left in time to get home and cook dinner for their families.

The young folks' branch of the Crop Corps called the Victory Farm Volunteers, is doing good work in every State. In Illinois 300 high school stu-

dents at Hoopeston and Rossville left classes a part of each day to work in the asparagus fields throughout the cutting season. Instructors from the high schools supervised them and received pay from the canners. Three canneries at Hoopeston alone have reported 700 and 800 acres of asparagus to be harvested and processed. McLean County, Illinois, needs 3 thousand 515 workers for its tomato and seed corn area. Churches, schools, defense councils, civic organizations and anybody else who will help is out recruiting laborers.

Boys and girls in Terrebonne, Parish, southern Louisiana, are helping to harvest 10 thousand acres of beans and 3 hundred thousand acres of potatoes. These young people went to school on Saturdays during the winter so they could finish up by May 15 and get into the fields. In Mississippi women have replaced men at the packing and grading sheds thus releasing more men to work in the fields harvesting the heavy bean, cabbage, and tomato crops.

The U. S. Crop Corps will probably number 3 and a half million before the crop season is over---3 and a half million patriotic men and women, boys and girls who have served their country just as truly as the boys who fly the fortresses or man the tanks. Each member of the Crop Corps working on a farm or in a food processing plant will get a certificate of service signed by the War Food Administrator, the chairman of the War Manpower Commission, and the State Director of Agricultural Extension.

When the need arises in any section of the country, the call goes out for workers. Local newspapers print it and radio stations broadcast it and tell where to enroll. Many clubs and other organizations get the news and spread it to their members. In that way the U. S. Crop Corps is fast becoming a huge working army.

